DILEXIT NOS

The Importance of the Heart

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network
UNITED STATES | CANADA
APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

Introduction

Pope Francis's encyclical Dilexit Nos reminds us of a profound truth: God loved us first. His love is not earned but freely given, calling us into a deeper relationship with Him. This guide is the first in a four-part journey through Dilexit Nos, offering Scripture, reflections, and prayer to help you open your heart to God's unfailing love. Whether alone or in a group, take this opportunity to pause, reflect, and respond to His invitation to love. Let this be a time of renewal as you grow in faith and embrace the love that transforms.

Opening Prayer

- Begin with the Sign of the Cross
- Prayer: The Daily Offering

> Father, here I am. I know you are always with me. I place my heart in the Heart of your Son, Jesus, who gives Himself to us in the Eucharist each day. May your Holy Spirit make me His friend and apostle, available for His mission of compassion. Take, Lord and receive all of my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings this day -all I am and possess- in communion with my brothers and sisters in the Pope's prayer network. With Mother Mary, I pray for the mission of the Church, for our bishops, and for the Pope's intention this month. Amen.

Grace

"Let us turn, then, to the heart of Christ, that core of his being, which is a blazing furnace of divine and human love and the most sublime fulfilment to which humanity can aspire. There, in that heart, we truly come at last to know ourselves and we learn how to love." Jesus, help us to turn to your heart, enkindle in us the fire of your love. Amen.

Quotes from *Dilexit nos*

Paragraph 11: “If we devalue the heart, we also devalue what it means to speak from the heart, to act with the heart, to cultivate and heal the heart. If we fail to appreciate the specificity of the heart, we miss the messages that the mind alone cannot communicate; we miss out on the richness of our encounters with others; we miss out on poetry.”

Paragraph 21: “This profound core, present in every man and woman, is not that of the soul, but of the entire person in his or her unique psychosomatic identity. Everything finds its unity in the heart, which can be the dwelling-place of love in all its spiritual, psychic and even physical dimensions. In a word, if love reigns in our heart, we become, in a complete and luminous way, the persons we are meant to be, for every human being is created above all else for love. In the deepest fiber of our being, we were made to love and to be loved.”

Sacred Scripture

1 John 4:7-8 “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.”

Ezekiel 36:26 “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”

Reflection Thoughts

The Heart as the core encompasses our mind, body, soul, our knowledge of ourselves, our openness to encountering others, to meeting God and his love. He calls us to be sincere and not conceal our hearts because concealing leads to confusion and a lack of understanding of ourselves and others. Concealing leads us farther away from others and deeper into isolation, and hardness of heart.

God's love has the power to take a heart that is not responsive to the love around them; an isolated, lonely, and cold heart, and is able to cultivate and heal it. God is able to bring us back to life, and open our minds, bodies and souls to see the blessings around us even in the midst of trial and suffering. He is able to bring healing, and restoration to the places of ourselves where we once asked, Do I even have a heart?

Reflection Questions

1. What resonates with you from Paragraph 11 and 21?
2. How do you see in your own life or in the lives of those around you how much we devalue the heart?
3. Do you believe that you were made to love and be loved?
4. How can you allow God to "Give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you"?
    a. What do you think that would change in you, and in your life?